

1

2

3

4

5

6 non-diegetic music

7

Mr. Beckett,  
Come in.

It's good to see  
you again,  
counselor. Judge  
Tate - Kendall  
construction.

(laughter)  
How are you?  
What happened  
to your face?

I have AIDS.

Oh, I'm sorry.

Can I sit  
down?  
Yeah.  
Thank you.



8

9

10

11

12

13

14 I've been fired by  
Wyatt - Wheeler. I

Oh, look at  
this. You have  
a new baby.

Yeah, a  
little baby  
girl.

-Oh, it's a girl.  
Congratulations.  
-Yeah, one week old.  
-Kids are great.

Thank you Beckett.  
I'm really excited  
about it. Listen...  
What can I  
do for you?

plan on bringing a  
wrongful termination  
suit against Charles  
Wheeler and his  
partners



15 You want to sue  
Wyatt, Wheeler,  
Helford, Tellow and  
Brown.  
Correct. I'm seeking  
representation.  
Continue.

16 I misplaced an  
important complaint.  
That's their story.  
Want to hear rhine?  
How many lawyers  
have you been to  
before me?  
- Nine.  
- Continue

17 instrumental  
music - FLASHBACK  
The night before it  
was due I worked  
on the complaint in  
my office and left it  
on my desk. The next  
day the complaint was  
lost.

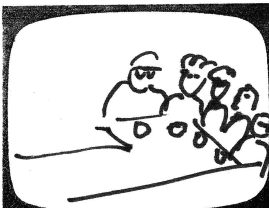
18 The next day I was  
summoned to a  
meeting of the  
senior partners.  
They were waiting  
for me in the  
conference room.  
Hello Andy! Come  
in

19 Would you mind  
hitting the windows?  
Thanks, hey.  
Come on in, come  
on in.  
Charles, Walter,  
Lydia

20 Thanks for coming  
in.  
Of course.

VIDESIGN PAD

21 Now Andy, before  
we begin, I just  
want to say that  
everyone in this  
room is your friend.  
I know that, Charles



More than your friend. Family.



2 This time. But what about next time? There won't be a next time.



3 It's just that something's come over you recently, Andy. Some kind of stupor, fogginess. Some people think you have an attitude problem, Beckett



Really? Who thinks that? I do.



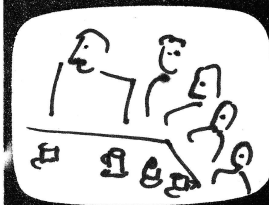
5



6 Excuse me, am I being fired?



7 Let me put it this way, Andy. Your place in this future of this firm is no longer secure. We feel it isn't fair to keep you here when your prospects are limited.



8 Now I don't want to rush you out but we've got a committee meeting.



9 Excuse me, Charles. If you'd lost confidence in me why'd you give me the Highline suit?



10 END OF FLASHBACK  
Andy, you nearly blew the entire case. That alone is inexcusable. It would have been catastrophic



11 So you were concealing your illness? That's correct.



12 Explain this to me like I'm a 2 year old. There's an element I just cannot get through my thick head. Didn't you have an obligation to tell your employer you had this dreaded, deadly, infectious disease?



13 That's not the point.



14 I don't buy it, counselor. That's very disappointing. I don't see a case.



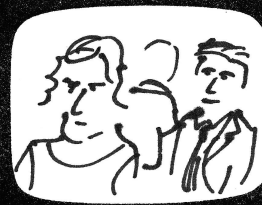
15 I have a case. If you don't want it for personal reasons... Thank you, that's correct. I don't



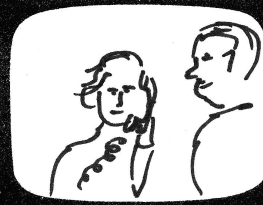
16 Well, thank you for your time, counselor. Mr. Beckett...



17 non-diegetic instrumental - Streets of Philadelphia  
I'm sorry about what happened to you. It's a bitch, you know.



18 Have a nice day Mr. Beckett. What the hell's the matter with that guy?



19 Iris, see if Armister can see me. Sometime this afternoon. Right away, Iris



20 Streets of Philadelphia moans  
VIDESIGN PAD



21 Tightening close up.

# FFORMMM

- F Focus** - main story of the scene; what it *says*
- F Function** - effect or purpose of scene; what it *does*
- O Order** - sequencing of shots, what leads to what
- R Relationships** - what ties shots together
- M Meter** - what is emphasized by length, position, or relative importance of shots
- M Meaning** - overall significance scene communicates

# Analysis of a scene

In *Philadelphia*, directed by Jonathon Demme in 1993, Tom Hanks plays Andrew Beckett, a lawyer who has recently been fired from his high-level law firm because he has AIDS. He's been trying to find another lawyer to represent him in a case of wrongful termination against his former employer. Denzel Washington plays Joe Miller, a lawyer and distant acquaintance of Andrew. The focus of this seven-minute scene is on Joe's rejection of Andrew's request for representation, but its function is to characterize Joe as well as the other lawyers who dismiss Andrew because of his medical condition. The scene demands the audience look unflinchingly at Andrew as a human seeking comfort but receiving none; the camera's sympathies are with him, not the callous attitudes of those that react out of fear rather than compassion.

When Andrew comes into Joe's office, Joe greets him with a warm handshake, but when Andrew candidly admits in response to a question that he has AIDS, the camera cuts to a high-angle long shot that shows Joe abruptly backing away from him, until he is all the way on the other side of the office, in a corner. At this point nondiegetic chords interrupt the otherwise 'normal' diegetic office sounds, emphasizing the change in Joe's attitude. The canted shot emphasizes a drawing of Martin Luther King, Jr. on Joe's filing cabinet, hinting at Joe's desire for justice and equality juxtaposed against his physical response. This is the last time in the segment that both men are featured in the same frame, other than in shadowed profiles, emphasizing their cool distance.

An uncomfortable silence follows, and the awkward framing and angle are not broken until Andrew asks if he may sit. Behind Joe written in reverse on his office window are the words “Toxic Tortes?”, a suggestion of how he views Andrew in light of the new information. As they make small talk about Joe’s new baby, the director creates a series of eye-line matches from Joe’s point of view that focus chaotic canted shots on the lesion on Andrew’s forehead and every item that Andrew interacts with - a picture frame, a cigar, a baseball hat - very closely. Joe’s characterization as created by these observed details, contrasting against fixed medium close-up shots of himself looking uncomfortable, anticipates his skepticism about Andrew’s claim that he was sabotaged by senior partners of his old firm to get rid of him. Joe lists all the names of the law firm partners, emphasizing their influence and therefore diminishing Andrew’s chances at victory against such a force.

The present-day shot is interrupted by a flashback to the day Andrew was fired from his law firm. He looks younger and healthier here. Andrew is invited into the senior partners’ conference room and is reassured by his boss, “Everyone here is your friend,” yet the chair placed for him is at a far distance from the other lawyers, all who are clustered together and shown by proximity to be acting as a unit. A series of mid close-ups between Andrew and the scowling faces of the partners demonstrates their hostility; one partner declares “That alone [losing the legal brief] is inexcusable.” The unspoken message is that there is a secondary reason for his firing; at that point Andrew seems to understand the scenario better. He is lost for words other than, “Uh-huh”; the big close-up in softened focus blocks out anything but his emotional response to this moment.

Back in present-day, Joe's question, his body language (hands together behind his head, reclining as far away from Andrew as possible), and the camera zoom to his unsympathetic face indicates his own hostility that Andrew had been concealing his "dreaded, deadly, infectious" illness; he is visibly repulsed. Now the differences between their costumes in the scene is highlighted; all those suits in earlier frames (including Andrew's own in the flashback) compared to his less formal dress and appearance now: he has been demoted from lawyer to client (diseased one, at that) in need of assistance. The close-up on Andrew's face reveals his own reluctant understanding that Joe didn't understand the point of the flashback. He states again, "I have a case," but allows Joe an out by offering him the chance to decline based on "personal reasons." Joe quickly jumps on this opportunity and the diegetic noises from the street slowly grow louder. Just before Andrew leaves, Joe tells him, "Sorry about what happened to you - it's a bitch," but as soon as he's gone, he looks at his hands with panic and rushes out - almost before Andrew is out of the office - to demand his secretary schedule an appointment with his doctor. His only thought is for himself, not for Andrew's situation - both professionally and health-wise. The frantic diegetic music and Joe's talking over Iris emphasizes lack of communication and the frenzy and misunderstanding that people viewed people infected with AIDS at the time.

The street sounds grow louder, and outside Andrew is framed in an extreme close-up as the nondiegetic “Streets of Philadelphia” song in which Bruce Springsteen quietly moans instead of sings. The shot is held for a long take; unidentifiable people rush by Andrew as he stands in front of the office, the words “Legal Services” clearly written on the door that has metaphorically closed behind him. He refuses to look directly at the camera, avoiding even its gaze. This shot links thematically to the earlier big close-up inside the law office; everyone has a place to go but he stays, left (literally and figuratively) out in the cold. But now he looks scared, as if he’s trying not to cry. The camera holds him there, and the viewer is forced into an intimacy with him because we are allowed to see him vulnerable as he would not allow himself to be inside the office.

The scene serves to isolate Andrew. Before the law was his life; now he’s been shut out (he’s admitted that he’d gone to nine other lawyers before Joe; we don’t need to see each scene filmed separately, but assume that each interview was similarly disheartening.). Because Demme allows the viewer to see Andrew up close and personal in different stages of his illness as well as different levels of personal confidence, we can sympathize with him and understand that his biggest fear right now is actually the progression of his illness which now separates him from everything he valued before.

Total word count - approximately 1000